

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA**

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA	)	
	)	Criminal No. 19-310
v.	)	
	)	Judge Cathy Bissoon
JAMES WILLIAMS,	)	
	)	
Defendant.	)	

**ORDER**

On approximately February 5, 2024, Chambers received correspondence from Defendant James Williams, requesting that the Court issue an Order clarifying that he is proceeding pro se, so that the Butler County Prison “will permit [him] to use a computer to prepare court filings, make photocopies of papers, and perform any other tasks relevant” to his self-representation. Defendant also asks the Court to clarify that his alias in this case is “Michael Johnson,” because that is the name under which he is being housed in the Butler County Prison.

Defendant’s letter-requests present multiple complications. First, the Court does not accept correspondence from litigants, and requests for relief must be made in the form of a motion, directed to the Clerk of Court for filing on the docket. Second, Defendant’s address of record is the Indiana County Jail, and he has failed to comply with the Court Order directing him to file with the Clerk of Court a notice of change of address. *See* text Order dated Nov. 1, 2023 (Doc. 372) (“Defendant is solely responsible for keeping-current and accurate his address of record, and any failure to receive Court filings, resulting from non-compliance, will not be excused.”). Third, the Order memorializing the grant of Defendant’s request to proceed pro se already was sent to him, at his address of record, on the date of entry. *See* Court-only Staff Note entered Nov. 1, 2023 (confirming mailing). Fourth, before granting Defendant’s request to

proceed pro se, the Court expressly warned him, and he acknowledged on the record, that the disadvantages in proceeding without legal representation include limitations regarding his ability to access legal and other materials, as compared to an appointed attorney.

It seems fair to conclude: the issues above serve to emphasize the challenges and pitfalls associated with self-representation. Notwithstanding the fact that Defendant's requests have not properly been presented (in the form of a motion, directed to the docket), the Court will address them presently, as best as it can.

**The Court hereby confirms that Defendant is proceeding in this case pro se.**

**The Court also confirms that the name "Michael Johnson" is identified on the docket as Mr. Williams's alias.** In supplying this information, the Court neither states nor implies that Mr. Williams is entitled to "special" privileges in pretrial detention, given his pro se status. Such determinations will be made pursuant to the detention facility's applicable rules, regulations and/or guidelines, and the Court will not intervene.

As a one-time courtesy, the Court will update Defendant's address of record, so that it is consistent with the return-address listed on his most recent envelope of submission (Michael Johnson, AKA, James Williams, #031488, Butler County Prison, 202 South Washington Street, Butler, PA 16001). Should his address change, he is solely responsible for filing a "notice of change of address," and any adverse consequences resulting from his failure to do so will be unexcused, and to his own detriment.

Finally, should the above issues, or any of the other recent developments in this case, cause Defendant to change his mind regarding the decision to proceed pro se, he may file a motion to appoint counsel.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

February 13, 2024

s/Cathy Bissoon  
Cathy Bissoon  
United States District Judge

cc (via ECF email notification):

All Counsel of Record

cc (sent to Defendant, via First-Class U.S. Mail, consistent with the return address on his most recent envelope of submission):

Michael Johnson, AKA, James Williams  
#031488  
Butler County Prison  
202 South Washington Street  
Butler, PA 16001